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**Kenilworth School District 38 to Continue Diversity, Equity, and Belonging Efforts
** Name-Change Petition An Initial Focus ****

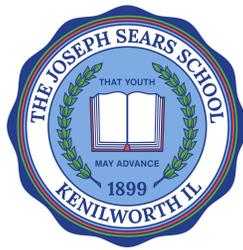
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kenilworth, IL (June 16, 2020) – The Board of Education for Kenilworth School District No. 38 recognizes it has been a difficult time for our community, nation, and the world recently and is reaffirming its commitment to ensuring a more equitable and inclusive community for all. As part of their commitment to examining diversity, equity, and belonging in the District, the Board has developed an action plan to address the recent petition created on Change.org to change the name of The Joseph Sears School. The Board fully supports robust and frank engagement by our students, families, alumni, and the community – to expand efforts to be more actively inclusive and develop productive ways to take action and make positive change. In the wake of the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent national protests, two recent New Trier graduates started a petition to rename The Joseph Sears School based on claims that Joseph Sears founded the town with exclusionary covenants limiting residents to “Caucasians only.”

“The Board is committed to understanding our history and the impact of our past, and we look forward to the opportunity to work collaboratively with our school community to expand our efforts to be more actively inclusive,” said Evan Lukasik, president of the Kenilworth School District 38 School Board. “The Board has received several emails on the re-naming petition that includes thoughtful input on both changing and preserving the name, as well as examining our curriculum.”

The school community has already begun looking at its history and supporting a more inclusive environment with the formation of a Diversity, Equity, and Belonging (DEB) Committee earlier in the school year. The primary goal of The Joseph Sears School DEB Committee is to build and nurture a culture where inclusiveness is a reflex, not an initiative. This goal is critical for our children because to be an engaged learner, a child must feel safe, included, and valued. This committee consists of school administration, teachers, a school board member, and community members.

At the last Board of Education Meeting on June 8, several other initiatives were discussed to ensure The Joseph Sears School is a more inclusive, diverse, and safe place for all, including an expanded curriculum, increased diversity training, strengthening hiring, recruitment, and retention processes, and creating a more welcoming climate for students, faculty, and staff.



The Board recognizes that the process for evaluating a possible name-change should engage the community in a public and transparent manner. Moving forward, the Board will listen to and participate in productive dialogue with our community as they examine the history of Joseph Sears and Kenilworth.

Next steps:

- **Fact Find:** The District has reached out to the petition organizers and invited them to send us the research, documents, and sources used to support their petition. The District also contacted the Kenilworth Historical Society for historical documents related to The Joseph Sears School and to study Joseph Sears's legacy more thoroughly. Additionally, the District is committed to hearing directly from diverse community members, present and past on their experiences living in Kenilworth and how to best support positive change.
- **Advisory Group:** The District is creating an advisory group to objectively review and discuss the facts (and perceptions), and gather additional information as needed.
- **Community Forum:** The Board will organize a community conversation on the subject for a productive dialogue where community members can come together to examine the history of Kenilworth and express perspectives on how to move forward to support a more diverse and inclusive school community.

The Board is committed to respectful dialogue that honors the traditions of our school and the interests of concerned stakeholders.

Further updates will be communicated in the weeks ahead as the research is examined, and the process is refined. The Board appreciates your patience as they work through this vital process.

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One of the highest performing school districts in Illinois, Kenilworth School District No. 38 is a K-8, single-school district located on Chicago's North Shore. The district serves students from families located in Kenilworth and parts of Wilmette and Winnetka.